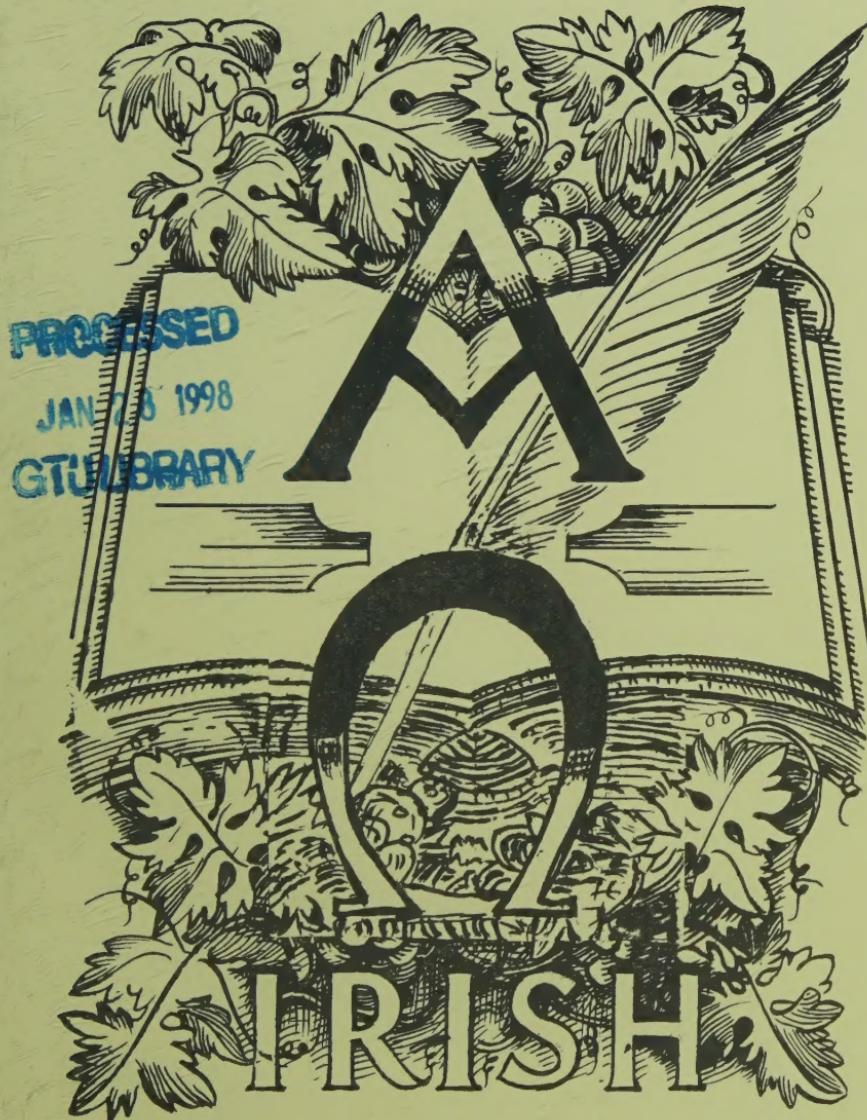


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# IRISH BIBLICAL STUDIES

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## LITERARY DEPENDENCE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES

*The Rev. Dr. George K. BARR*

The article attempts to determine the differences between a literary dependence which involves the copying from another text of unusual ideas, terminology, textual units or syntactical rhythms, and the similarities which may be the result of discussion or of sharing common preaching material. The detection of prime patterns in the Paulines and in the group comprising Hebrews and 1st and 2nd Peter simplifies the problem.

Many scholars have attempted to show the dependence of one or other of the New Testament epistles upon another epistle. For example, certain points of contact between 1 Peter and Ephesians may be identified, or between 2 Peter and Jude, and the attempt is made to show which epistle is dependent upon the other. The word 'dependence' has often been used in a loose sense and it has not been made clear whether the commentator had in mind the copying of literary material or simply that one author was familiar with the content of another author's work.

Occasionally scholars have attempted to determine priority by examining the structure of the text but more often recourse has been made to dating ideas and concepts, thus placing the texts in chronological order. Dating according to the presence of supposed references to Gnostic movements and locating by the presence of Hellenisms in the texts can be problematical.

In this study, 'dependence' is taken to mean that one author had before him the text of another author's work and that some direct copying took place. Unusual ideas may have been copied; to constitute 'dependence' it is necessary that the ideas should be unusual. If the ideas were in common circulation at the time then it may not be concluded that one text is dependent upon the other. Unusual terminology may have been copied and to this the same argument applies. Whole phrases or sentences may have been lifted from the text. More difficult to identify are instances in which the syntactical rhythm has been copied, but has been

disguised by the use of synonyms. It is now a much simpler task to identify such cases, as the computer may be used to locate syntactical strings using the initial tags of the tagged machine readable texts. The use of the first two tags attached to each word allows a closer examination to be made which can identify, for example, the use of imperative participles.

Beyond the area of literary dependence which is involved in direct copying, there lies a large grey area in which an author may use many synonyms of words found in another author's work, and may employ parallel syntactical constructions. In such cases it is difficult to distinguish between material which shows familiarity with the written work of another author and material which has been produced after shared discussion, each author writing up the discussion in his own way.

This present study investigates these possibilities, but it also has a different starting point from that of other studies. It begins with the results of the application of literary scalometry which were found in two previous articles - *Scale and the Pauline Epistles* (IBS 17,1, pp.22-41) and *The Structure of Hebrews and of 1st and 2nd Peter* (IBS 19,1, pp. 17-31). These articles reveal the scale-related prime patterns which link all thirteen of the Pauline epistles and also show that Hebrews and 1st and 2nd Peter share a quite different prime pattern. The search for similar patterns which coincide with identifiable discourse units and which might be mistaken for these prime patterns has covered over half a million words by a dozen authors in three languages ancient and modern. So far no similar patterns have been found. For the purposes of this paper, therefore, it is accepted that the Pauline prime patterns indicate that the mind of Paul lies behind each of the thirteen Pauline epistles and that Hebrews, 1st and 2nd Peter come from the hand of Silvanus. The arguments leading to these conclusions are given in the two articles mentioned above.

Acceptance of this position greatly simplifies the matter of 'dependence'. There is no need, for example, to devote time and effort to the supposed 'literary dependence' of 1 Peter on Hebrews if it is accepted that they were written by the same person. But before considering the possible dependence of one epistle upon

another, further consideration must be given to the meaning of 'literary dependence', and this is done by means of the following example.

A divinity student at Trinity College, Glasgow was asked at short notice to give a five minute talk on Rudolph Otto with whose work he was at that time unfamiliar. He took Otto's book, *The Idea of the Holy* and skimmed through it. It soon became clear that there were certain key words which in Otto's thinking carried special connotations - these he underlined. On reading through the book a second time it became clear that the essence of Otto's thinking was contained in a few short sections. Much of the remainder of the book which put flesh on the bare bones could be ignored for the time being as the student prepared an outline of the main themes.

The talk which he prepared relied on a framework which was established by selecting these key words, a few important phrases and one or two longer sentences which seemed to encapsulate the essence of the book. These were strung together with his own text to provide the talk.

On looking back to identify the points at which the text of the talk was dependent on Otto's book, it was not difficult to pick out the portions of text which had been lifted from the original and incorporated within the student's own text. These points of contact were clustered in those sections which he found rewarding, while other portions of the book were unrepresented. The order in which these points of contact occurred in the talk corresponded generally to the order in which they were found as the argument developed in the original text. These are important features concerning this type of literary dependence.

A similar result is obtained by turning to *Comparative Religion* by E.O. James (London:Methuen, 1961). James devotes three pages to the work of Rudolph Otto and the main points of contact between his summary and Otto's book, *The Idea of the Holy*, are shown below. The page numbers refer to the 1959 Pelican paperback edition of Otto's book, and the text indicates the main points of contact which have been identified in pages 40-42 of James's summary, in the order in which they occur.

## Page

- 21      *sui generis*  
 20      Quotation - "unique original feeling-response.....in its own right."  
 21      the numinous  
 22f     creature-feeling  
 24      Quotation - "self-abasement (Otto - "submergence").....of some kind."  
 26      mysterium tremendum  
 45      fascination  
 45      Quotation - "the daemonic divine object.....his own."  
 143     numen loci, el, baal and the like  
 143     "How dreadful is this place."  
 111     Plato - "ideologies of myth....by enthusiasm or inspiration....eros or love....mania or the divine frenzy"  
 130     Quotation - "peculiar interpretations.....transcending it."  
 130     Kant

There are other references of a general nature which cannot easily be tied to a particular locus in the original text, but these points of contact outlined above follow the order of the original text except in the case of references on page 143 which are out of order and have been combined with other material by James for the sake of brevity.

Important characteristics of this kind of literary dependence are that points of contact occur in clusters and occur more or less in the order in which the relevant matter occurred in the original. The clustering is not a random phenomenon, but is related to the layout of important points in the argument. The order is not rigidly observed, but may be rearranged to suit the later author's purpose. Nevertheless, something of the original order may be preserved.

It is quite in order for students to approach such a task in the manner outlined above. They are dealing with material in which theologians are creating language, either by inventing new words (like 'numinous') or giving new connotations to familiar terms. A student at that stage has no other language with which he can describe the thinking of the theologian and must be heavily dependent on the original text. In his précis there will be a marked

absence of synonyms as the student is as yet unsure of the precise shades of meaning attached to these technical terms. If, however, a group of such students were to discuss or write about the work of the same theologian a year later, they might do so without showing any literary dependence of this kind. They might indeed use some of the specialist terms, but these terms would have become widely known and used generally as part of everyday theological language. In the interval, the students might well have read widely and become able to place the work of the theologian against a wide spectrum of theological thinking. They would certainly use Otto's terms but would also use synonyms with greater freedom. There would be no clustering of references, and their essays would be much less likely to reflect the order of the layout of the original book.

A correspondence of language may be found in the works of two colleagues engaged in research, such as Crick and Watson who discovered the helical nature of the structure of the DNA molecule in the 1950's. The writings of these two men during the weeks leading up to the discovery might employ similar highly esoteric terminology. If so, any attempt to show that one was dependent upon the other would be misguided. They were at the forefront of research, developing technical language, giving old words new connotations.

The writers of the New Testament epistles were also in this position. They were original researchers breaking in new ground, developing new vocabulary in discussion and giving old words (such as ἀγάπη) new meanings. They had to tackle rival philosophies and heretical tendencies. Leaders like Paul and Silvanus, travelling companions in mission, were preachers and apologists who heard each other's sermons and arguments repeatedly. They were familiar with their colleague's vocabulary and phraseology, yet each was an experienced scholar in his own right and well able to express himself. Much discussion must have taken place in the group of apostolic writers as the expression of the Christian faith developed, and each writer reflected the discussion in his own way. If dependence of one upon another is to be established, then it must be shown that there is a difference between

the kind of literary dependence in which one writer has before him the text of another author and copies key terms, ideas or syntactical rhythms from it, and the kind of similarities which arise from the sharing of thought and terminology among partners engaged in research and discussion.

Literary dependence, in the sense of the **copying** of vocabulary, phrases, sentences and ideas, will not be rich in synonyms as the copyist is in a position of dependence and may be unsure of precise shades of meaning. The points of contact may well cluster in the original, as some particular passages are likely to appeal to the copyist as containing the essence of the work. The borrowed portions of text may also preserve something of the order of the original. Material in which authors have reflected **shared discussion** may show points of contact without there being any question of literary dependence; synonyms may be more commonly used as both authors are fluent in the subject. It is more difficult to distinguish between the latter case and one in which an author is familiar with the written work of another, rather than having engaged in discussion with him.

Moffatt was aware of this problem and in connection with the relationships between 1 Peter and Ephesians, and between 1 Peter and James, wrote briefly of 'a certain community of style and conception prevailing among early Christian writers of this class'<sup>1</sup>. However, he says of 1 Peter and Ephesians that 'the affinities between the two, not only in phraseology but in structure and conception, involve a literary relationship which implies that one drew upon the other....' He cannot, however, decide which was first to be written, saying that 'either Peter knew Ephesians, or if the latter is post-Pauline, the author of Ephesians...was acquainted with the Petrine pastoral'<sup>2</sup>.

In this present study, it is accepted that scalometric analysis indicates that the prime patterns of all thirteen Pauline epistles have their origin in the mind of Paul, that Silvanus wrote Hebrews, and also (possibly at Peter's instigation) 1 and 2 Peter. The question of

<sup>1</sup> James Moffatt, *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, (3rd ed. ;Edinburgh:T. & T. Clark, 1920), p. 338.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 338.

dependence is therefore considerably restricted and concerns mainly the relationships between the Paulines and the group which came from the hand of Silvanus, the relationships between the epistle of James and the other epistles, and the relationships between the epistle of Jude and the other epistles. The epistles under the name of John are scarcely relevant to the matter of dependence among the epistles.

No fewer than sixteen epistles came through Paul and Silvanus and as these were colleagues in mission and travelling companions they must each have been familiar with the thought and expression of the other. There is no question of there being one dominant scholar and personality, the other borrowing from him; both were articulate, able thinkers and writers. Yet it is worth while considering the points of contact between the two corpora. These are:

1P1:14 = Ro.12:2, 1P1:22 = Ro.12:9f., 1P2:5 = Ro.12:1,  
1P2:6-8 = Ro.9:32-33, 1P2:10 = Ro.9:25, 1P2:11 = Ro.7:23, 1P2:13-  
14 = Ro.13:1-4, 1P3:9 = Ro.12:17, 1P4:7-11 = Ro.12:3,6, 1P2:1f. =  
1Cor.3:1f.,10f.= Col.3:8, 1P1:5 = Gal.3:23, 1P2:16 = Gal.5:13, 1P1:3  
= Eph.1:3, 1P1:3-5 = Eph.1:5-15, 1P1:10-12 = Eph.3:5,10, 1P1:13 =  
Eph.6:14, 1P1:13-15 = Eph.2:3, 1P1:18 = Eph.4:17, 1P1:20 =  
Eph.1:4,9, 1P1:23 = Eph.1:13, 1P2:1-2 = Eph.4:22-25, 1P2:6 =  
Eph.2:20, 1P2:4-6 = Eph.2:18-20,21-22, 1P2:13 = Eph.5:21, 1P2:18 =  
Eph.6:5, 1P3:1,5 = Eph.5:22, 1P3:4 = Eph.3:16, 1P3:7 = Eph.5:25,  
1P3:19 = Eph.4:8-9, 1P3:22 = Eph.1:20-22, 1P4:2-3 = Eph.2:3f.,  
1P4:10 = Eph.3:2, 1P1:18 = Tit.2:14, 1P2:1 = Tit.3:3, 1P2:9 =  
Tit.2:14, 1P2:11 = Tit.2:12, 1P2:13 = Tit.3:1, 1P1:3,3:21 = Tit.3:5,

Heb.10:30 = Ro.12:19, Heb.10:38 = Ro.1:17,  
Heb.11:11,12,19 = Ro.4:17-21, Heb.12:14 = Ro.14:19, Heb.13:9 =  
Ro.14:2f., Heb.13:20 = Ro.15:33, Heb.2:4 = 1Cor.12:11, Heb.2:8 =  
1Cor.15:27, Heb.2:14 = 1Cor.15:26, Heb.5:11-14 = 1Cor.2:6,3:2,  
Heb.6:10 = 2Cor.8:4, Heb.10:28 = 2Cor.13:1, Heb.13:18-19 =  
2Cor.1:11-12, Heb.2:2 = Gal.3:19, Heb.6:6 = Gal.3:1,  
Heb.12:22,13:15 = Gal.4:25f., Heb.1:4 = Phil.2:9f., Heb.13:16 =  
Phil.4:15,18, Heb.13:24 = Phil.4:21-22.

Examination of the points of contact between 1 Peter and Romans shows that a common term is used in seven instances; synonyms are used in another three instances. Of the three longer phrases which the texts have in common, two are quotations and

one is a commonplace ('evil for evil'). In every case the thought in each epistle is expressed differently. While several points of contact involve Romans 12, the parallels in 1 Peter are widely scattered and there is no significant clustering. The occurrences do not follow a significant order. These points of contact do not point to literary dependence but show two articulate writers expressing shared thought each in his own way.

The three points of contact between 1 Peter and 1 Corinthians and Galatians are scattered and involve a single common term in each case plus one synonym. The thought in each case has similarities but is expressed in different ways. They are of no significance regarding dependence.

There are numerous points of contact between 1 Peter and Ephesians, but in every case the thought is expressed differently. For the most part the point of contact rests on a single term and synonyms are frequently used. Advice to slaves, husbands and wives is found in both but treated differently. There is no significant clustering or common order in the occurrences. These are random correspondences in the works of two men dealing with a common fund of preaching material. The affinities are so strong that some scholars have thought that both were written by Silvanus. That, however, is not the case, as the prime pattern of Ephesians is a classical Pauline pattern and the prime pattern of 1 Peter is that which is found also in Hebrews and 2 Peter. Such is the weight of these points of contact, however, that it suggests a closer relationship than is the case in other epistles. It suggests that these two epistles were written at about the same point in the missionary travels of Paul and Silvanus, reflecting their discussion and preaching at a particular stage in the development of their thought. This is of significance regarding the dating of 1 Peter and Ephesians.

The points of contact between 1 Peter and Titus rest on isolated terms and the occasional synonym. The two epistles have some traits in common, but in every case the thought is expressed differently.

There are also some points of contact between Hebrews and the Pauline epistles. Between Hebrews and Romans the points

of contact involve two quotations used differently; a term, a synonym, an illustration and a blessing, all used differently. There are no clusters or orders of occurrence of any significance.

Between Hebrews and the group comprising 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians and Ephesians there are few points of contact. All involve a common term or illustration. Occasionally a synonym is used and in every case the material is handled differently. The contacts are too few to show any clustering or order.

It is clear that in these points of contact between the Pauline corpus and the group which comes from the hand of Silvanus there is no substantial evidence of literary dependence in the form of the copying of vocabulary, phrases or sentences. Many of the ideas which appear to be in common are found to be handled quite differently. Neither author can be said to be dominant. Both authors are thoroughly articulate and at these points of contact either author may provide the richer expression. The strong affinities found at some points do not reflect literary dependence on the part of one of the authors, but do reflect the close relationship which Paul and Silvanus may have enjoyed on their preaching tours during which they may have shared deep discussion and frequently heard each other preach.

The epistle of James finds echoes in the Paulines and in 1 Peter. There are no significant points of contact between James and Hebrews, and those between James and Jude are limited to a few common words. The points of contact with the Paulines are as follows:

Jas.1:2-4 = Ro.5:3-5, Jas.1:6 = Ro.4:20, Jas.1:22 = Ro.2:13, Jas.2:11 = Ro.2:22-25, Jas.2:21 = Ro.4:1f., Jas.2:24 = Ro.3:28, Jas.4:1 = Ro.7:23, Jas.4:4,7 - Ro.8:7, Jas.4:11 = Ro.2:1, Jas.1:26 = 1Cor.3:18 = Gal6:3, Jas.2:5 = 1Cor.1:27, Jas.3:15 = 1Cor.2:14, Jas.2:8-12 = Gal.5:14 = Ro.13:8f., Jas.2:10 = Gal.5:3, Jas.4:4-5 = Gal.5:17, Jas.1:4-6 = Eph.4:13f., Jas.5:13f. = Eph.5:19,6:18.

The most numerous contacts are with Romans and it is noticeable that in every case James's way of expressing himself is quite different from that of Paul and at several points he uses synonyms. Even in James 1:2-4 and Ro.5:3-5 where there is the

greatest concentration of common terms and synonyms, the contexts are quite different. James 2:21 (=Ro.4:1f.) and 2:24 (=Ro. 3:28) reflect the argument over faith and works but there is no evidence of literary dependence; two articulate writers are independently expressing their sides of the argument.

The points of contact in the other Paulines consist of a few scattered references. In every case the two authors express themselves differently and synonyms are used frequently. There is no clustering or significant order. The dependence which Moffatt finds to be plain is not a literary dependence of James upon Paul; James is a pungent and articulate writer and thinker in his own right. The scattered references might well, however, reflect discussion and argument rather than familiarity with the written word.

In considering the points of contact between James and 1 Peter, the use in both epistles of διασπορά (two out of three occurrences in the N.T., the other being in John) and παρακύπτω (the only two occurrences with εἰς) and δοκίμιον (only two occurrences in N.T.) is noted. The points of contact are as follows:

1P1:1 = Jas.1:1, 1P1:3 = Jas.1:18, 1P1:6 = Jas.1:2, 1P1:7 = Jas.1:3, 1P1:23 = Jas.1:18, 1P2:1f. = Jas.1:20f., 1P2:11 = Jas.4:1, 1P2:25 = Jas.5:19, 1P3:15-16 = Jas.3:13, 1P4:8 = Jas.5:20, 1P5:4 = Jas.1:12, 1P5:5ff. = Jas.4:6f., 1P5:6 = Jas.4:10.

It is notable that except for the instances noted above there is little in the way of common vocabulary; many synonyms are used, and the two authors always express themselves in different ways. The points of contact are scattered and there is no order to suggest that one author had the text of the other before him. It is more plausible that the epistles reflect discussion, and the use of rare terms suggests that the two authors had personal contact with each other.

The points of contact in James and Jude have little significance, but 2 Peter and Jude provide correspondences of a different kind. Most of these occur in the second chapter of 2 Peter and between v.4 and the end of Jude, but several occur outside these boundaries. Found only in Jude and 2 Peter are παρεισδύνω (in 2 Peter παρεισάγω), συνενωχέω, ὑπέρογκος and ἐμπαίκτης. The word ἄλογος has one other occurrence in Acts. These terms

are all chosen to awaken the church to the vile nature of the teaching that is being so cunningly introduced. They are used only in response to the nature and the methods of the libertine movement which the church leaders are opposing. The false teachers "sneak in" (*παρεισδύνω*) or in the other transitive form (*παρεισάγω*) they "sneak in" their teachings. They turn the Christian love feast into shameless carousing (*συνευωχέω*). In classical Greek *εὐωχεω* has an emphasis on sumptuous provision and making merry. Their words are those of "swollen headed" people (*ὑπέρογκος*). In classical Greek *ὅγκος* meant a top-knot giving height and carrying overtones of conceit and arrogance. They were mockers - *ἐμπαίκτης* - (Lat. illudere - with the suggestion of trickery and deceit). They were literally without reason - *ἄλογος* (from *ά* and *λόγος*). These unusual terms are all adopted to meet the specific situation.

The points of contact between Jude and 2 Peter are as follows:

Jd.3 = 2P1:5,2:21, Jd.4 = 2:1-3, Jd.5 = 1:12, Jd.6 = 2:4, Jd.6-7 = 3:7, Jd.7 = 2:6, Jd.8 = 2:10, Jd.9 = 2:11, Jd.10 = 2:12, Jd.11 = 2:15, Jd.12 = 2:13, Jd.12-13 = 2:17, Jd.16 = 2:18, Jd.17 = 3:2, Jd.18 = 3:3, Jd.21-23 = 3:14, Jd.24 = 3:14,17, Jd.25 = 3:18.

The points of contact for the most part follow a systematic order and are much more dense than in the other comparisons which have been made above. In every case, however, each author has expressed himself in his own way and there is a substantial proportion of synonyms and alternative terms. Where there is a dense cluster of common words as in Jude 4 and 2 Peter 2:1-3 or Jude 10 and 2 Peter 2:12, each author uses the words in a different order. The density of the points of correspondence suggested that it might be worth while checking the syntactical strings in case the use of synonyms was disguising the copying of syntactical constructions, but no strings of significant length were found.

Kümmel<sup>3</sup>, in his attempt to summarise the current position of mainstream scholarship, places Jude at about the turn of the second century and 2 Peter anywhere thereafter up to about A.D.

<sup>3</sup> Kümmel, W.G. *Introduction to the New Testament*. London:SCM Press, 1975.

150. He claims that there is a literary dependence on the part of 2 Peter. One must therefore imagine the author of 2 Peter sitting down to write his epistle with the text of Jude before him, copying the terminology and illustrations more or less in the order in which they are found in Jude, but recasting each verse in a completely different syntactical form and reflecting quite different perceptions. It is difficult indeed to understand how the text of 2 Peter could be arrived at by such selective cribbing, but the theory is rendered impossible by the scalometric analysis which shows that the prime pattern of 2 Peter matches those of 1 Peter and Hebrews, indicating common authorship. If it is accepted that Silvanus is the author of these three works then both Jude and 2 Peter must be early and reference to second century Gnosticism is out of the question; the false teaching referred to must be related to an incipient phase of an early and local libertine movement with Gnostic tendencies.

It is difficult to imagine the motive of a writer of the calibre of the author of Hebrews responding to false teaching by taking an epistle like that of Jude's and cribbing the terminology in the order in which it occurs and recasting each sentence in a different syntactical form reflecting his own perceptions. Yet a reason must be found for such a writer using those terms in that order and displaying linguistic and stylistic features which Moffatt noted as having a "cumbrous obscurity". It is highly unlikely that these points of contact represent the copying of terms from a written text. Nor would familiarity with another author's text be likely to produce patterns of this kind.

The most plausible solution is that a group of leaders in the early Church were faced with pressure from a group whose teaching was displaying first signs of a developing libertinism, possibly on Gnostic lines. After discussing the problem, sermon material was prepared and possibly taken by members of the group to a number of congregations. Members of the group may indeed have heard each other preach this material repeatedly. The tone and the terminology may have been contributed by several members of the group. In time, Jude wrote the sermon material up in his own way, reflecting his own perceptions. Silvanus too wrote the material up, and in his version are heard echoes of the voices of

members of the preaching group. In the Greek may be heard the echo of Peter's voice, and perhaps with good reason Silvanus has incorporated the material in his epistle under Peter's name. The frequent preaching of the common material would account for the order. The freedom which each preacher had would account for the many synonyms and alternative terms, and the reflection of different perceptions.

To sum up, the striking features about all these comparisons, with the exception of the last between 2 Peter and Jude, are that the points of contact are very scattered and follow no significant order; that many synonyms and alternative terms are used; that there is no significant clustering of terms such as might be expected in dependent work and very importantly, that the contexts of these points of contact are usually quite different. They are random points of contact resulting from the sharing of ideas and vocabulary and do not produce the kind of patterns which result from a direct literary dependence. Indeed, any attempt to show literary dependence among these epistles is entirely misconceived. However, the existence of a vague "community of atmosphere" is not enough to account for these relationships; they result from much discussion and argument among the apostolic leaders and from hearing each other in their apologetic and preaching work.

The relationship between 2 Peter and Jude is special in that the weight of points of contact, the order in which they occur and the use of unusual terminology points to a more structured origin. It is inconceivable, however, that either of the authors might sit down to write an epistle, with the text of the other before him, and produce the script which he did. The answer must lie in the texts used by the group in a campaign combating the insidious tendency which had arisen - a campaign in which they heard each other preach the material frequently so that in the hands of each it adopted a similar form, with common illustrations and terminology. Silvanus and Jude then wrote it up each in his own way, maintaining the general order, preserving the illustrations and vocabulary, but showing great individuality in their perceptions and in their expression.

George K. Barr,

## EATING IN CORINTH: FULL MEAL OR TOKEN MEAL?

*Rev. Fergus J. King*

Much contemporary analysis of the Eucharist at Corinth assumes it took place within the context of a 'full meal'. This paper asks whether we are justified, on the basis of the text of 1 Corinthians and the origins of the Lord's Supper, in making such claims about the Corinthian practice and raises the possibility of the Eucharist being celebrated as part of a 'token meal' tradition.

### Introduction

In many commentaries on 1 Corinthians, the passage in 11.17-22 is represented as showing that the Eucharistic practice of the Corinthians was set in the context of a full meal, that is, that a ritual meal, the Eucharist, was linked to a full fellowship meal.<sup>4</sup> Paul is writing, the thesis continues, to put an end to abuses which took place within this situation, abuses which led to the exclusion of some members of the congregation by the others. Professor O'Neill has raised an objection to this scenario with his remarks:

"There is no early evidence of a stage in the history of the Eucharist when the distinct act of worship is being disentangled from something embedded in a full-scale meal."<sup>5</sup>

If O'Neill is right, there must be a different explanation of the meal in Corinth to that which is offered in the general thesis described above: that thesis would seem to demand the kind of situation which O'Neill says cannot be shown by contemporary evidence. Are there any possible alternatives to the Eucharist within

<sup>4</sup> Ruef, J., *Paul's First Letter to Corinth*, London: SCM, 1977 is critical of approaches which see the Corinthian practice as involving two meals: a "fellowship meal" combined with a cultic "meal" (see p. 113, n. 450). It would appear that the choice must be of one or the other.

<sup>5</sup> O'Neill, J.C., "Bread and Wine" in *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 48 (1995) 169-184, quotation from p. 179.

the full-scale meal? If so, what could they be? In this paper, a possible alternative will be suggested which would point to the Corinthian meal being a ritual meal, that is, a token meal which did not take place within the context of a full meal. The thesis contains two distinct arguments: the first concerning the origins of the Eucharist, and the second examining whether the situation described in Corinth must involve a full meal.

## The Origins of the Eucharist

The first of our two arguments concerns the origins of the Eucharist, an investigation which draws us back to discuss the nature of the Last Supper. Jeremias' monumental study, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*<sup>6</sup> popularised the view that the Last Supper was a Passover Meal, a view that helps to promote the Corinthian situation as being a ritual within a full meal. The Passover Meal was a full meal, with a strong ritual element, and, it can be argued, the early Christians copied this pattern when they instituted the Eucharist as a part of their worship. However, there are objections to this theory, and other meals have been suggested as possible precursors of the Eucharist, notably the *qiddus*, *haburah* and Qumran meals.<sup>7</sup> Of these three rival theories, the Qumran hypothesis appears to be the strongest contender.<sup>8</sup> However, the search for alternatives is also based on arguments which arise from within the Gospel traditions. A reading of Jeremias shows that his arguments for the Last Supper as Passover depend on accepting the Marcan chronology as accurate. He rejects the Johannine tradition which is claimed to be governed by theological rather than historical concerns.<sup>9</sup> However, strong arguments can be made for the preference of the Johannine tradition over the Marcan. The

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<sup>6</sup> Jeremias, J., *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, London: SCM, 1987 (1966 ET).

<sup>7</sup> Jeremias: 1987, pp. 26-36.

<sup>8</sup> O'Neill: 1995, p. 183, drawing on the work of G.D.Kilpatrick. Ashby, G., *Sacrifice*, London: SCM, 1988, pp. 106-7 also quotes Kilpatrick favourably.

<sup>9</sup> Jeremias: 1987, pp. 82-3.

Marcan chronology demands many events take place at times when such activities were restricted by the constraints of the Passover regulations. Jeremias' contentions that there are precedents which show the restrictions could be lifted are open to the charge of anachronism: there is no guarantee that rabbinic regulations from one period apply in another.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, O'Neill has shown that the temporal phrases usually interpreted as tying the Last Supper to the Passover Meal can be interpreted, in accordance with contemporary Jewish usage, as referring to the Passover season.<sup>11</sup> We might think of the way that the words "Christmas" and "Easter" can be used in Christian circles to refer to specific feasts (Christmas Day, Easter Day) or seasons (Christmas-tide, Easter-tide) as analogous with O'Neill's argument. The net result of this is to loosen the bonds which tie the Last Supper to the Passover Meal and instead argue for it being a meal held in the Passover season, or rather in the run-up to the Passover. The loosening of these bonds also weakens the identification of the Last Supper with a full meal, a factor demanded by its connection to the Passover Meal. Matthew 27.62 might also be taken as arguing against the Last Supper as Passover Meal with its reference to the meeting between the chief priests and Pharisees with Pilate taking place "the next day, that is, after the day of Preparation" (NRSV). It might be argued that this is close to the Johannine tradition, because it would place the death of Jesus on the day of Preparation. The Marcan account, however, brings this into question because there is an identification of the day of Jesus' death as being the "day of Preparation" (Mark 15.42), but a preparation for the Sabbath, not the Passover.

It is, however, the rehabilitation of the Johannine chronology which makes it impossible to identify the Last Supper with the Passover Meal. According to John, Jesus dies on the Day of Preparation, at the time when the lambs are slaughtered (John 20.14,30; cf. Mark 15.34): the chance of him sharing the Passover

<sup>10</sup>) O'Toole, R.F., "Last Supper" in Freedman, D.N. (ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 4, New York: Doubleday, 1992, pp. 234-241 notes the objections to the Passover Meal theory (esp. pp. 235-7).

<sup>11</sup>) O'Neill: 1995, pp. 169-176.

Meal with his disciples is completely ruled out. The Johannine chronology also makes possible all those events which would be hard to explain as taking place after the Passover, that is, during the period marked as the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread, events which remain harder to explain if occurring within the period of the feast.

O'Neill has further suggested that the Pauline tradition has close links to the Johannine tradition, in that it stresses a connection between the events of the Passion and the Passover without making an identification of the Last Supper and Passover Meal. In 1 Cor 5.7 Christ is identified with the slaughtered lamb of the Passover, but neither this passage nor the longer treatment of the Eucharist draws any connection between the Last Supper and the Passover Meal itself.<sup>12</sup>

Instead of identifying the Last Supper and the Passover Meal, supporters of the reliability of the Johannine tradition tend to make a connection with the tradition of token meals which existed at Qumran. Three texts give information about the Essene meal:

“Wherever there are ten men of the Council of the Community there shall not lack a Priest among them. And they shall all sit before him according to their rank and shall be asked their counsel in all things in that order. And when the table has been prepared for eating, and the new wine for drinking, the Priest shall be the first to stretch out his hand to bless the first-fruits of the bread and new wine.”  
(1QS 6.4-6)

“And [when] they shall gather for the common [tab]le, to eat and [to drink] new wine, when the common table shall be set for eating and the new wine [poured] for drinking, let no man extend his hand over the first-fruits of bread and wine before the Priest; for [it is he] who shall bless the first-fruits of bread and wine, and shall be the first [to extend] his hand over the bread, [and] all the congregation of the Community [shall utter a] blessing, [each man in the order] of his dignity.” (1QSa 2.17-21)

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<sup>12</sup> O'Neill: 1995, p. 177.

"The priest prays before the meal, and it is unlawful for anyone to partake before the prayer. The meal ended, he prays again; thus at the beginning and at the close they pay homage to God as the bountiful giver of life." (Josephus, War 2.131).<sup>13</sup>

The interpretation of these passages varies quite considerably: some see them as referring to a full "fellowship" meal<sup>14</sup>, others to a "token" meal.<sup>15</sup> The classifying of the Qumran meals as "token" appears to rest on an identification with the Inter-testamental *Joseph and Asenath* in which Asenath is given the bread of life and cup of immortality as a sign of her being purified from her pagan past.<sup>16</sup> The passage from Josephus, when viewed in its context, would appear to refer to full meals, and thus deny the possibility of a token meal. However, there is no guarantee that the Qumran communities had only one kind of meal. Support for this statement comes from an unlikely source: Jeremias' arguments against the Essene meals as a possible source for the Last Supper. Jeremias quotes some remarks of Hunzinger to the effect that 1QSa 2.17-21 refers not to daily meals but rather to a cultic Messianic meal. Jeremias tries to limit the role of these meals, suggesting that they would only take place in the Messianic times (implying that they will be, but are not yet, part of the community's practice), and placing any possible formative role for

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<sup>13</sup> 1QS and 1QSa from Vermes, G., *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, London: Penguin, 3rd ed., 1987, pp. 69 and 102 respectively. Josephus, War 2.131 from Jeremias: 1987, p. 33, note 3.

<sup>14</sup> Ruef: 1977, p. 114, note 456.

<sup>15</sup> O'Neill: 1995, pp. 183-4.

<sup>16</sup> See especially Joseph and Asenath 8.5,9 (11); 16.16 and 19.5 for references to the "bread of life" and "cup of salvation" which Asenath is finally allowed to share after rejecting pagan worship: these passages are variously interpreted as indicating an active token meal tradition. Text available in Bürchard, C. (translator), "Joseph and Asenath" in Charlesworth, J.H., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 2, New York: Doubleday, 1985, pp. 177-247. The verses are found on pp. 212, 213, 229 and 233. See also Jeremias: 1987, p. 33 and O'Neill: 1995, pp. 181-2.

Christ's practice back in the Passover practices.<sup>17</sup> Against Jeremias, it might be legitimately asked whether communities which believed themselves to be living in the Messianic period might not, indeed, engage in such celebrations. The strands in Paul's theology that point to such a possibility, inasmuch as Christians are already glorified (Rom 8) and have already received the promises of God (Gal 3.2-5)<sup>18</sup>, might open the door to the consideration that Christian communities, believing that the Messianic age was begun, even if not yet fully completed, could express their faith in token, Messianic meals.

The main implication of such an hypothesis is that the Eucharist and its development are removed from the context of a full meal *at any stage*, even in the institution of the ritual. The Eucharist is seen as always being a token meal, distinct from full meals, and the placing of the Corinthian rite in the context of a full meal is no longer demanded by the pre-history of the ritual. Freed from the apparent necessity of the Eucharist as "rite within full meal" by its origin within a token meal tradition, we are now free to ask whether the description of events in Corinth itself demands such a scenario.

## The Situation in Corinth

The Eucharist at Corinth is described in 1Cor 11 in a passage where Paul outlines the abuses of rite (11.17-22), and reminds the Corinthians of the Institution of the Lord's Supper as a corrective (11.23-26) before finishing with practical instructions about orderly celebrations (11.27-34).

The abuses at Corinth are twofold. Firstly, they are a further manifestation of the divisions which have already been noted within the congregation (11.19; cf. 1.10ff.). Secondly, and more importantly for this discussion, there is improper conduct at the meal: people are eating their own meals (*τὸ ιδιον δεῖπνον* v.21)

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<sup>17</sup> Jeremias: 1987, pp. 35-6.

<sup>18</sup> Betz, H.D., *Galatians*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979, p. 256 argues that the Galatians are in danger of losing not just what is promised, but what has already been obtained.

rather than the Lord's Supper (κυριακὸν δεῖπνον v.20). This abuse further manifests itself by some being hungry (πεινᾶ v.21) whilst others are "drunk" or "sated" (cf. Rev. 17.6; μεθύει v.21). It is often added that this is a division of rich and poor because of the apparent humiliation of "those who have nothing" (καταισχύνετε τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας v.22). This scenario often is seen as the abuse of a full meal. Does, however, the text itself demand this situation? I think not. The primary objection that Paul has to the Corinthian practice is that a confusion is taking place: the confusion of the Lord's Supper with an ordinary meal. The accusation that is being laid before the Corinthians is that they are confusing the Lord's Supper with mere eating and drinking, which they could do at home.<sup>19</sup> The question of whether they are confusing a full meal or a token meal with eating and drinking is rarely considered: my contention is that these descriptions rest on the assumption that the natural development of meal practices was from the Passover "full meal" tradition. If a "token meal" tradition is viewed as supplying the origin it is still possible to argue that the confusion taking place is one of the Lord's Supper with eating and drinking. It is also possible for people to eat and drink badly in the situation of a token meal: the care taken over celebration and preparation for reception of the Eucharist in later ages points to the possibilities for such abuses. Legislation is not made for the impossible, nor even is advice. Nor is such a confusion of eating/drinking with good thinking limited to Corinth: it supplies the basis of the first part of the teaching about the Bread of Life in John 6.25-28. None of the language used about the abuses of eating/drinking demands the situation of a "full meal", or indeed a meal in which everyone is satisfied. V.34 is a firm rebuttal of any views that would imply that the abuses at Corinth would have been overcome if everyone went away satisfied: ending hunger, or "good sharing" is not the primary goal of the Lord's Supper. Perhaps that consideration itself is a warning against thinking of the Corinthian meal as having to be a properly conducted "full meal"? However, such considerations are

<sup>19</sup> Baird, W., *The Corinthian Church—A Biblical Approach to Urban Culture*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1964, p. 129; Ruef: 1977, p. 112.

never part of a “token meal” rationale. Paul’s criticism of the Corinthian practice is not just that “some are hungry, and some are sated”, but that this is completely the wrong way to think about the Lord’s Supper: other points are incidental.

A further point can be made in passing about the nature of abuses at Corinth: it is suggested that the divisions that are shown are between rich and poor. This is puzzling: previous references to divisions refer to groups centred on individuals rather than income groups. Indeed, nowhere in the letter is a gulf between rich and poor mentioned as a fault in the Corinthian congregation except at this point. Bornkamm is typical of this: he boldly states that there is a division between rich and poor, but provides no supporting evidence for this theory.<sup>20</sup> It is possible however that we might be in a different situation and the phrase which usually is translated as having the sense “poor” (“those who have nothing” (RSV) τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας v.22) might be a reference to the righteous, or those who have a correct view of faith and practice. Similar expressions are found earlier in the letter when the Cross is described as “foolishness” and “weakness” (1.18-25) and the true believer is also a “fool” (3.18). Paul also turns the values by which he is judged upside down, making every criticism a basis for pride in his work (4.8-13). With this background, it might be possible to read “καταισχύνετε τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας” as a repetition of the idea of τὰς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ Θεοῦ καταφρονεῖτε rather than a reference to the poor. Such a reading would make τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας closer to the idea of πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι (Matt 5.3) rather than its counterparts in Matt 25.29 and Luke 19.26. Such a reading would, however, also fit with the benefit that is shown by the divisions, that of revealing who is “genuine” (δόκιμοι 11.19). The “genuine” (v.19), the “church of God” and “those who have nothing” (both v.22) would be one and the same, those both revealed and insulted by the poor practices of their fellow Corinthians.

One major obstacle seems to remain in the way of the token meal thesis: δεῖπνον vv.20, 21) and its associated verb, δειπνῆσαι (v. 25). O’Neill notes the last as a major obstacle in his arguments

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<sup>20</sup> Bornkamm, G., *Paul*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971, p. 192.

for a token meal origin for the Eucharist. There are two points to be made in discussing these items: firstly, the terms of reference of v. 25, and secondly the meaning and implications of the δεῖπνος words themselves.

Of v. 25, O'Neill says:-

"Unfortunately for my theory there occurs in the midst of this parallel command a time note: μετὰ τὸ δεῖπνησαι, after having made a meal. If the cup comes at the end of a meal, the giving of the bread having come at the beginning, we seem to have to do with a ceremony inextricably linked with a meal, and one might even think, a Passover-type meal in which a last cup is particularly prominent."<sup>21</sup>

O'Neill's solution is to see the insertion of the Last Supper tradition as by a hand other than Paul's, and based on a misunderstanding of the Corinthian assemblies. This seems unnecessarily complicated and it is difficult to see any justification for such a theory of composition. However, there is, it seems, an alternative. Firstly, it seems to me that O'Neill has added difficulties for himself by assuming that 1 Cor 11.23-5 refers to the Corinthian practice. It would seem to be an account of the Last Supper rather than a rubric for contemporary worship or a description of affairs at Corinth. It may even be, *pace* the longer text in Luke 22.20, that this is a part of a transmitted tradition. As such, the phrase tells us nothing about practice at Corinth itself.

Does it, however, demand that we posit a full meal (Passover type) scenario for the Last Supper, thus shredding the theory of the token meal? It need not, and this leads to a second point. The answer is not straightforward, because the meanings of the words δεῖπνον/δεῖπνησαι (vv. 20 and 21, v.25) are vague: they may not give as much information as commentators would like. It is worth quoting Orr and Walther's comments:-

"it is not possible to come to any helpful conclusion about the nature of the meal from the use of the word *deipnos* for "supper". The word usually referred to a late afternoon meal (whence the appropriateness of English "supper"). In

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<sup>21</sup> O'Neill: 1995, p. 178

the Bible it is never used to mean merely an act of eating: it refers to a meal, and its appropriateness for a festal meal is ambiguous.”<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, δεῖπνον need not just be restricted to ordinary meals: it has strong associations in both Biblical and Hellenistic writings with cultic meals, especially with the sense of joining the believer to the deity.<sup>23</sup> If this meaning can be borne by the Greek of 1 Cor, this might raise the implication that the danger of eating privately (v.21) rather than the Lord’s Supper (v.20) is that it does not bring communion with Him, only with oneself. In v.25, the phrase μετὰ τὸ δεῖπνησαι could then bear the sense “after the ritual/cultic meal”, which need not carry the implication of a full meal.<sup>24</sup> None of these usages would thus demand the situation of a full meal, either at Corinth or at the Last Supper. As such the theory stands firm, and it can be argued that the Corinthian situation could be that of a token meal.

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<sup>22</sup> Orr, W.F. and Walther, J.A., *Corinthians*, New York: Doubleday, 1976, p. 272.

<sup>23</sup> Behm, J., δεῖπνον, δεῖπνέω in Kittel, G., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 2, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968 (1964 ET), pp. 34-5. When talking of the cultic aspect, note specifically, “[the] underlying thought is that of *communio*, of union of those who eat with the deity.” (p. 35) See also the remarks of Klauck, H.-J., “Lord’s Supper” and Myer, M.W., “Mystery Religions”, both in Freedman, D.N., *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 4, New York: Doubleday, 1992, pp. 363-372 (esp. 369-70) and pp. 991-5 (esp. p. 994) for further information about Jewish and pagan background for cultic meals. The concept of *communio* might also help to explain 1 Cor 11.29-30 which are difficult to see as the result of “poor sharing” alone. Ashby: 1988, p. 107 argues that the possibility of incurring damnation by bad practice points to a sacrificial understanding of the meal. Such an identification might suggest that the Passover meal, which, classically, was not a sacrificial meal is a poor forerunner. Against that must be noted the increasing tendency in first century Judaism to see the Passover as sacrificial because of the transformation of the feast from a domestic to a Temple celebration.

<sup>24</sup> The final meaning comes close to that suggested by O’Neill: 1995, p. 178, but via a different route.

One possible objection must be noted. A variant textual tradition (D\*, F, it, vb<sup>ms</sup>, sa; Ambst) records the words εἰς δεῖπνον as part of 1 Cor 10:27. In that context, δεῖπνον would refer to an ordinary meal, a reference which might be perceived as weakening the case for the ritual meal interpretation. Two points may be made.

The first is that the textual evidence would appear to weigh against εἰς δεῖπνον as part of the text<sup>25</sup>. If the text of 10:27 is taken as not containing this phrase, the only instances of δεῖπνον-vocabulary in the Pauline writings are those in 1 Cor. 11:26 no other Pauline occurrence would demand that δεῖπνον must be indicative of an ordinary meal setting rather a cultic meal according to his usage.

Secondly, even if εἰς δεῖπνον were included in the text, there would still be no necessary demand that it implied a full meal setting. The work of scholars like Barr has shown that there is more to meaning than purely lexical or etymological approaches suggest: such features as the absence or presence of an article, qualifying adjectives and the context of a particular usage all may lead to variations in meaning<sup>27</sup>. The difference in context, the presence of qualifying adjectives (κυριακὸν - 11:20,21 respectively) and the article (τὸ- 11:21) could point to different fields of meaning.

The English usage of the word “supper” illustrates such phenomena: there is an evident difference in meaning if we talk of “the Lord’s Supper” and of “going to supper”. We can see the difference immediately in our own language, but not in New Testament Greek which is always more remote to us. Of course, it

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<sup>25</sup> Nestle, E. & Aland, K. *Novum Testamentus Graece*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979 (26e), p.458 and Aland, K. et al., *Greek New Testament*, Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1983 (3e), p.601 both omit εἰς δεῖπνον from the final form of the text.

<sup>26</sup> Bauer, W., Gingrich, F.W. & Danker, F., *A Greek-English lexicon of The New Testament & Other early Christian Literature*, Chicago., C.U.P., 1979, p.173.

<sup>27</sup> Silva, M., *Biblical Words & Their Meaning*, Grand Rapids: Academie, 1983, pp.22-32 summarises Barr’s work and the discussion about lexical fields.

must be added, that the above illustration should not be made the basis of any argument about the lexical fields of δεῖπνον: an identity of lexical fields between two languages should not be assumed and even less allowed to dictate the interpretative process.

The upshot of all this is simple: all that is asked that in the process of interpretation, the possibilities of meaning be fully examined, and possible fields of meaning not be excluded prematurely. Under such circumstances, it would appear possible to claim that xxxxxxxx itself, and its range of meanings, need not demand either a full or a token scenario. Ultimately, the answer will be found in the context, and that must include the account of the origins of the rite, especially because the details of the actual practice remain obscure.

There is, however, one weakness to this proposal: in 1 Cor 10.27, δεῖπνον is used to describe eating with an unbeliever, and is most emphatically set in the context of an ordinary meal. Whether or not the suggestions given for thinking of 1 Cor as referring to a cultic or ritual meal will stand or fall on the possibility that the words can carry different emphases or meanings in different circumstances. If such variations are seen as permissible, the thesis can hold.

## Conclusion

The proposal that the meals of the Corinthian congregation were token is based on an identification of the prehistory of the ritual and the Last Supper with a Qumran meal tradition rather than the Passover Meal. In turn this is based on a rehabilitation of the Johannine tradition as being reliable over against the Marcan account of the Passion. It is thus argued that the meal tradition being abused was of a token meal rather than of a full meal. Many of the phrases customarily assumed to refer to a full meal tradition are re-interpreted as referring rather to a cultic, token tradition. Such interpretations do not do violence to the words themselves, or to their possible parameters of meaning, but the question will finally be determined by the parameters which the reader thinks possible within one text (cf. 1 Cor 10.27; 11.20,21,25). There is no firm conclusion here, but rather an invitation to check what is so

King, **Eating in Corinth**, IBS 19 Oct. 1997 often assumed, and to see whether those assumptions finally can be maintained or be replaced by a fresh theory, or be rejected in favour of an *aporia* which admits our limitations in discovering what really was happening in Corinth.

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## PAUL'S MISSIONARY STRATEGY

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A lecture given at Macquarie University, Sydney, on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1997 and the J. E. Davey Lecture at the Union Theological College, Belfast on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1997. In memory of David Holt Roberts, minister of the gospel, born 24<sup>th</sup> December 1914; died 12<sup>th</sup> November 1997.

On the basis of Rom 4, Gal 2 and Rom 15, Paul held that Jewish believers should go on observing the ceremonial law as well as the moral law. His strategy was to set up independent Gentile congregations alongside the synagogues. When we peel off the scribal corruptions in Acts that suggest that the Jews were Paul's main enemies, and that he was forced to go to the Gentiles by their opposition, we find the strategy argued for above.

Historians of ideas have to work with simple theories, continually refined. On the one hand the evidence is endlessly intricate and hard to interpret. On the other hand there must be order in the evidence; there must be a simple rational explanation of the phenomena. So, we imagine a pattern and see if the myriad pieces of evidence fit the pattern.

But there is a further complication. Our sources may be biased, or be seeking to trick us, to hide from us the true story. Again, we need to imagine simple patterns and we have to test those patterns against thousands and thousands of pieces of evidence.

Since the eighteenth century historians of early Christianity have largely worked with the simple theory most notably proposed by Ferdinand Christian Baur in the 1830s. This theory has been endlessly refined, modified and drastically emended; but it is basically the same. It was originated by Thomas Morgan.

Baur argued that Paul was a universalist who challenged Peter the particularist. Paul's ideas were set out in Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians and Galatians. Peter's ideas were set out in the Revelation of John the Divine, primarily directed to the eventual triumph of Israel. Christianity as we know it was the gradual

O'Neill, Paul's Missionary Strategy, IBS 19 Oct. 1997  
reconciliation of these two clashing systems in the synthesis of Catholic Christianity.

Johannes Munck showed in 1951 that the theory is inherently improbable. F.C.Baur had conceded that the earliest apostles granted Paul the right to prosecute a Gentile mission, but he gave no explanation as to why they did so, if their position was particularist. "The earliest church is pictured as not having understood Paul, who rediscovers the universalism and freedom which Jesus represented; and yet its leaders, with a really incomprehensible tolerance, have admitted the right of missions to the Gentiles, and have given Paul a status equal to their own."<sup>1</sup>

Yet Baur's theory is still very much alive. Professor J.D.G.Dunn, for example, has argued that Paul attacked the Law as a means of salvation. And why? Because it made boundary markers between Jew and Gentile. In other words, Paul was a universalist who attacked a "covenantal nomism which insisted on treating the law as a boundary round Israel, marking off Jew from Gentile, with only those inside as heirs of God's promise to Abraham."<sup>2</sup>

This is not just an eighteenth-century idea. The roots of it lie in Luther with his slogan *sola fide*. Whatever else the works of the law do, they divide Jew from Gentile; *by faith alone* excludes these works. Harnack's thumbnail sketch of the history of these ideas is an accurate if oversimplified account of how the story is still conceived of: Paul did not quite see the logic of his position and retained some Jewish particularist ideas; Marcion understood Paul better than he did himself; Luther carried the programme further; and it was left to Harnack to complete the process.<sup>3</sup>

This simple picture is unlikely to be true, for Paul expected Jews who believed to remain Jews. There are three pieces of evidence: Rom 4 on Abraham; Gal 2, the Jerusalem agreement; and Rom 15, Paul's boast about what he was trying to do.

First, Rom 4. In verses 9-12 it is taught that Abraham was the father of the uncircumcision and father of the circumcision. He was father of the uncircumcision in that he received the sign of

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<sup>1</sup> Munck (1951, p.5).

<sup>2</sup> Dunn (1991, p. 138).

<sup>3</sup> Harnack (1924, especially pp. 215-223).

circumcision as a seal of the righteousness through faith he showed while he was uncircumcised. He was father of the circumcision in that he received circumcision and imposed it on his male descendants; these descendants not only live by circumcision but also follow in the footsteps of the faith Abraham showed when he was uncircumcised. So, believing Jews were to continue to circumcise their sons. Abraham was father of two sorts of people who live by faith: the uncircumcised and the circumcised.

This distinction depends on a distinction between the moral law and the ceremonial law. This distinction is clearly presupposed in Romans. In Rom 2.25 the Jew is addressed: If you, the circumcision, are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision is become uncircumcision. The argument is continued in the next verse by pointing to the Gentile who, though uncircumcised, keeps the righteous commandments of the Law. Will not God account the uncircumcision as circumcision? That does not mean that circumcision is a matter of indifference. The phrase τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου, the righteous commandments of the Law, refers to the moral law distinguished from the ceremonial law. The argument implies that the Jews were required to keep both the moral law and the ceremonial law, whereas Gentiles, who remained Gentiles, were to keep only the moral law.

Secondly, the Jerusalem agreement according to Gal 2.7-10. This passage implies five points. It implies that God had worked through Peter and Paul in distinctive ways. Peter had been successful as an apostle to the Circumcision, Paul successful as an apostle to the Gentiles. Then it implies that the Jerusalem leaders acknowledged that Paul's work was the result of God's grace. Then it records that the Jerusalem leaders, by giving the right hand of fellowship, were agreeing that henceforth Paul and Barnabas would go to the Gentiles and that James, Cephas and John would go to the Circumcision. Then it lays down one condition: that Paul and Barnabas would not forget the Poor (meaning the Poor in Jerusalem). This entailed their getting Gentiles to send money to Jerusalem. That implied that Paul would establish Gentile congregations, for the Jewish synagogues were accustomed to send money to Jerusalem already, in the form of Temple tax. This is

presumably a fulfilment of the prophecy that the wealth of nations would be sent to Jerusalem (Isa 60, especially 60.11). Finally, Gal 2, in using the term *Circumcision* for Jews and the terms *Gentiles* and *Uncircumcision* for non-Jews, showed that those who believed in Jesus Christ were to remain divided into two distinguishable groups, Jews and Gentiles. Paul boasted that he was an apostle to the Gentiles and used the term τὰ ἔθνη to speak of his special work (Rom 1.5; 11.13; 15.16,18; Acts 9.15; 22.21; 26.17 &c.). F.C.Baur on Romans had to translate τὰ ἔθνη as *The Nations* (meaning all nations, including the Jewish nation) in order to preserve his central idea that Paul was a universalist.<sup>4</sup> What ignorance.

Thirdly, Paul's boast in Rom 15.14-29. Through the grace of God, he argues, he has been able to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles (Rom 15.15-16a). This ministry has enabled him to act as a priest of the Gospel of God so that the offering brought by the Gentiles should be acceptable to God as sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Rom 15.16b). Later he says that he aspired to preach where Christ was not yet named so that he was not building on another's foundation (Rom 15.20).

There is no statement that Paul's view of himself as an apostle to the Gentiles precluded him from going into the synagogue when he visited a new city. He would naturally try to persuade both the Jews and proselytes on the one hand and the Godfearers on the other hand that Jesus was the Messiah. But he

<sup>4</sup> Baur (1845; English translation, vol. 1, pp. 333-4): "As to what he [Paul] says at the beginning of the Epistle, of his vocation to proclaim the Gospel to the ἔθνη, that is not to be understood, as Neander takes it, as an intimation that his being the Apostle of the Gentiles had made him feel it his duty to write to the Romans. It must not be overlooked, and the better commentators have drawn attention to the fact, that the ἔθνη of [i.] vv. 5 and 13, are not the Gentiles, but the nations generally. The Apostle refers to the obligation attaching to his apostolic office of preaching the Gospel to all men, without distinction of race and culture, as the reason why he writes to the Christians of Rome...In order to meet the objection that he was an Apostle of the Gentiles and had nothing to do with Jewish Christians, he speaks of the Jews as one people under the general term of the ἔθνη."

wanted to build where no one else had laid the foundation, that is among Gentiles who had not even attached themselves to a synagogue where they would have heard Christ talked about as expected. Messianic expectation was central to synagogue worship and Paul wanted to work where the coming of the Messiah had not previously been talked of.

The description of his work as priestly service that ensured that the sacrifice of the Gentiles was acceptable to God shows that the Gentiles were to become in each place a separate congregation that would be responsible for causing their sacrifice to ascend to God. Paul was to establish separate congregations and to fulfil his ministry by seeing that the Gentiles offered worship that was pure and undefiled.

We must conclude, on the evidence of these three passages from Paul's epistles, that the Apostle was working with the full agreement of the Jerusalem leaders, that his primary mission was to go where Christ had not yet been named and to establish Gentile congregations that would send gifts to Jerusalem and that would offer acceptable sacrifice to God as a result of Paul's ministry. Synagogues that came to believe that Jesus was the Messiah were to continue to live under the full teaching of the law in both ceremonies and in morals. The Gentile congregations were not to become Jews but to observe that part of the law, the moral commandments, that applied also to them.

It will be objected that two parts of Galatians contradict this assumption that Paul meant Jews who believed that Jesus was Messiah were to go on observing the ceremonial law of Moses. The first is the rebuke to Peter from withdrawing from eating with Gentiles (Gal 2.11-14) and the second is the statement that, if anyone received circumcision, Christ would be of no benefit to them (Gal 5.2-6).

We know from the Epistle of Aristeas that it was possible for devout Jews and Gentiles to eat together, and from the story of the conversion of the royal family in Adiabene (Josephus, Antiquities 20.34-96) that circumcision was not always required of Gentiles who wished to become Jews. Possibilities were wider than later practice may have suggested, but that story of Izates of

Adiabene shows that there were also Jews who insisted that Gentiles had to become Jews and accept circumcision if they were to be truly obedient to the Law of Moses (Josephus, Antiquities 20.43-48).

It is perfectly feasible, then, for Peter to change his mind about eating with Gentile Christians if that eating would hinder his mission to those of the circumcision who had not yet accepted Jesus as the Messiah. These Gentile Christians in Antioch would have been Godfearers who were attached to synagogues that accepted Jesus as Messiah. Peter would not be expelling them from the synagogue by refusing to eat with them. In fact, the Jerusalem decree recorded in Acts 15 may well have been a response to that problem, laying certain restrictions on Gentile Godfearers in Christian synagogues so that table fellowship could be secured. Nevertheless Paul would have opposed Peter for his action because it could well suggest that the Gentiles should become proselytes in order to be able to join in eating with the Jewish members of the synagogue. But Paul's opposition to Peter did not imply that he had changed his mind and now maintained that Jewish Christians should cease to observe the full ceremonial law of Moses. He opposed Peter because Peter threatened the live-and-let-live spirit of the Jerusalem agreement, not because he thought Peter should abandon the ceremonial law.

Gal 5.2-6 has often been read as a statement by Paul directed to all Christians that, if any of them received circumcision, Christ would be of no benefit to them. Gal 5.4 indeed says, "You will have been severed from Christ, whoever of you who would be justified in the Law; you will have fallen away from grace." However the context makes it clear that those who were seeking to be justified by the keeping of the whole law were Gentile believers who were seeking to take on the ceremonial law required of the Jews as well as the moral law required of both Jews and Gentiles. They were Gentiles who had become Christians while remaining Gentiles. If such Gentiles, who had been baptized, who had shared the bread and wine of Christ, should now become proselytes (while still confessing Jesus as Messiah), they would be suggesting that Gentile Christians were not proper Christians. Paul, whose chief

task was to bring Gentiles as Gentiles to receive Jesus as Messiah, was fighting for the pact that had been made at Jerusalem which fully recognized these Gentile Christians. At all costs he must prevent people he and the Jerusalem leaders regarded as full Christians from suggesting that they lacked something; that they had to go on to become Jews in order to be saved. Again, nothing in the fierceness with which Paul defends his position can be taken as showing that he thought that all Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, had to abandon the ceremonial law. He assumed that Jewish Christians would remain full Jews.

My thesis must face a further massive objection, this time not from Paul's epistles but from the Acts of the Apostles. On a superficial reading of Acts, far from suggesting that Paul always had a settled policy of establishing separate Gentile congregations alongside the synagogues that believed Jesus was Messiah, the book presents an entirely different picture. Paul preached in the synagogues but so infuriated the Jewish members of those synagogues that they drove him out and forced on him the Gentile mission. The implication is that his universal gospel threatened the distinctiveness of Judaism; Jewish rejection of this principle left Paul with no alternative but to go to the Gentiles instead. If Acts is correct, the reading of Paul's missionary strategy I have been arguing for is unlikely to be right.

My case will be that the superficial reading of Acts just given is in fact well grounded in the text of Acts as we have it now: Paul is said to arouse Jewish hostility in almost every city, and this Jewish hostility is what is said to make him turn to the Gentiles. However, the features of Acts that convey this impression turn out to be scribal corruptions that have been imported in the second century to an original narrative. That original narrative itself provides us with clear evidence to show that Paul in fact followed the strategy we have deduced from his own letters.

On the general hostility of the Jews, note first that there was a tendency of scribes to insert a reference to the Jews when the original text is likely to have had no particular designation of the people involved. Nestle-Aland's twenty-sixth edition prints *The Jews* in the text of Acts 69 times. Other manuscripts have *The Jews*

16 more times (Acts 1.12; 4.13; 6.1,7;13.14,42; 17.19; 18.17; 20.24; 23.25,30; 26.17,20; 27.9; 28.29; 28.30). Of the 69 cases in our standard printed text, there are 11 cases where at least one manuscript omits the term. There are a further 16 cases where the term appears in at least two different positions in the verse, and that fact could indicate that the term *The Jews* was a gloss; glosses tend to get put into the text in different places. To sum up, of 85 possible occurrences, 43 are doubtful. A scribe has even inserted the note into the narrative of Paul's visit to Athens that it was the Jews who led Paul to the Areopagus (Acts 17.19 minuscule 1838).

Some of the cases of *The Jews* where all known manuscripts give the term are intrinsically unlikely. For example, when Paul is dragged before the judgment seat of Gallio in Corinth (Acts 18.12-23), his captors said that Paul was persuading men to worship God *against the law* (Acts 18.13). They must have meant against civic law, since Roman law was tolerant of all religions. Gallio says he is ready to punish wrongdoing, but is not going to rule on talk of the names of the gods and on Corinthian civic law. The crowd then beat up an official called Sosthenes who could have been either a Jew, proof that the crowd were not Jews, or a Greek (ἀρχιστυνάγογος is a Hellenistic term as well as a Jewish term)(Acts 18.17). No subject is expressed, but some minuscules supply *The Greeks* (307. 431. 45. 2818) and others supply *The Jews* (36. 453). It was common in Greek to leave the subject of third person plural verbs unexpressed, and that gave scope for scribes to make false specifications. The process is, I believe, responsible for the specification of the *The Jews* as Paul's enemies in another passage, that concerned with the events in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13.50). Notice that Acts 13.50 ends by stating that those who raised the persecution against Paul and Barnabas drove them out of *their* boundaries. The Jews of Pisidian Antioch would not be said to regard the city boundaries as their boundaries; the term most naturally suggests that the citizens of Pisidian Antioch were expelling Jewish trouble-makers from their territory.

There are ten occasions when the present text of Acts makes the Jews the instigators of riotous persecution of Paul from a city: in Damascus (Acts 9.23-24); in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13.50);

in Iconium (Acts 14.2); in Lystra, when Jews are said to come from Antioch and Iconium (Acts 14.19); in Thessalonica (Acts 17.5); in Beroea, when Jews from Thessalonica are said to come to stir up the crowd (Acts 17.13); in Corinth (Acts 18.12-17); in Ephesus (Acts 19.23-41); in Greece (Acts 20.3); and by report in Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders at Miletus (Acts 20.19). Not one of these reports is historically plausible. Jews were the victims of riots, not the instigators, and if we remove the glossing references to the Jews we recover a plausible story of Gentile opposition to what they would have perceived as Paul's Jewish mission.

Our present text of Acts not only creates the general impression that the Jews were the main persecutors of Paul. There are also three occasions where Paul states that he is turning to the Gentiles because of the hostility of the Jews: in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13.45-47); in Corinth (Acts 18.6); and finally in Rome (Acts 28.25-28). When we look closely at these three explicit statements we find each of them in turn to be suspect.

Take the case of Pisidian Antioch in Acts 13. We have already seen that the seizing of Paul and Barnabas by the mob and the appeal to Gallio was not likely to have been the work of the Jews.

In Acts 13.45 the Jews are said to be full of *jealousy* at the success of Paul's mission to the Gentiles. But the word ζῆλος can just as well mean *pride* as *jealousy*, and pride is more likely.

When Paul explains why he is turning to the Gentiles, he cites Isa 49.6, "I have appointed you a light to the Gentiles so that you will be their salvation to the end of the earth." Who did the prophet mean by *you*: "I have appointed you"? In context he must mean Israel as a whole. The logic of the argument from Isa 49 is that Israel, having first heard the good news of the Lord for themselves, must then become a light to the Gentiles. This is exactly Paul's argument in Galatians.

I suggest that the little word ζῆλος and the general hostility of the second-century church to the Jews led scribes to fill out the argument by suggesting that Jewish hostility drove Paul to the Gentiles. The words, "and they disputed the words spoken by Paul, reviling him" (Acts 13.45b) are an insertion. Similarly the words,

"Since you have thrust away the word of God and do not judge yourselves worthy of eternal life" in Acts 13.46b are a gloss.

A few verses earlier we find another precious piece of evidence that the original text of Acts assumed the strategy agreed at Jerusalem and reported in Galatians. In Acts 13.43 we are told that many Jews and Godfearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas from the synagogue where they had been speaking. Then it is reported that Paul and Barnabas "spoke to them and persuaded them to remain in the grace of God." This must mean that Paul taught them to remain faithful members of the synagogue. Proselytes were Jews, and they and the born Jews who believed Jesus was Messiah were to stay faithful members of the synagogue. Paul had no remit to detach either born Jewish believers in Jesus Christ from their allegiance to the synagogue, or Gentiles who had become Jews by becoming proselytes.

The first dogmatic statement that Paul went to the Gentiles because of Jewish hostility proves to be embedded in a context that teaches otherwise. It is a second-century gloss.

The second similar dogmatic statement occurs in Acts 18.6 reporting Paul's work in Corinth.

The external facts of Paul's life provide us with the first clue. At the beginning of his visit he went to live with a Jewish fellow-tradesman, Aquila, and Aquila's wife Priscilla. He preached every sabbath in the synagogue and his audience naturally included interested Greeks as well as Jews. When Silas and Timothy joined him he was free to stop work and turn to his main vocation. Presumably his mission to the Gentiles prospered because he could then move his work from the synagogue into the house of the Gentile Titius Justus, who lived next to the synagogue. Presumably Paul still continued living with Aquila and Priscilla (despite the reading of Codex Bezae, Acts 18.7), for Aquila and Priscilla accompany him on the next stage of his journey, to Ephesus, where he left them to settle (Acts 18.18-19). The move of the work to a Gentile house argues a sufficiently self-conscious group of Gentiles who could support Paul in the eighteen months of successful preaching and teaching to follow (Acts 18.11).

That outline of events is perfectly understandable once we know Paul's strategy, as we do from Galatians; there is no intrinsic need for any event in the synagogue in Corinth to precipitate his full-time work among the Gentiles. If any event made full-time work possible, it was the arrival of Silas and Timothy.

Yet there was a period between the arrival of Silas and Timothy while Paul was still teaching in the synagogue. What was he doing then? Our printed texts state that Paul was διαμαρτυρόντες τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν (Acts 18.5b). That is odd, for earlier, before Silas and Timothy came, it was also said that Paul reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath and persuaded Jews and Greeks. Surely that means he persuaded them that Jesus was the Messiah. The second reference to the later period of full-time activity must have had a different character. Because we know Galatians, we understand that Paul would now be deliberately gathering the Gentile Godfearers for further instruction. Most manuscripts, however, say that he was addressing Jews—Jews exclusively. (Remember that before Silas and Timothy came he persuaded both Jews and Greeks of the gospel, Acts 18.4). Concentration on the Jews is nonsensical. The Codex Alexandrinus and codex 014 omit τοῖς Ιουδαίοις in Acts 18.5, and we should accept their reading.

The Codex Bezae of Acts 18.6 provides us with a further valuable clue. The verse opens with two genitive absolutes: πολλοῦ δὲ λόγου γνομένου καὶ γραφῶν διερμηνευομένων, “a great deal of teaching took place and the scriptures [that referred to the Messiah (Blass)] were either translated or explained [the verb can have both meanings; cf. Acts 9.36 and Luke 24.27].” Of course if the audience were purely Jewish, the scriptures would be interpreted; if the audience were Greek, both translation and interpretation would be in order.

If we ignore the words that set forth the theory that Paul only went to the Gentiles because the Jews rejected the messiahship of Jesus, we get a perfectly straight-forward story. Paul first preached for many sabbaths and persuaded both Jews and Greeks. He had obviously convinced Aquila and Priscilla, and he must have convinced other Jews. When Silas and Timothy came from

Macedonia, he could devote himself to his main task. From Galatians we can deduce that his main task was to found a Gentile congregation alongside the synagogue. He first, surely with the approval of the synagogue authorities, engaged in teaching the Gentiles on synagogue premises, teaching that involved translating and interpreting the scriptures. His success then led him to move the purely Gentile group next door to the house of Titus Justus. There he stayed eighteen months.

The alien theory is contained in our Acts 18.6 (*The Jews* having already been inserted into 18.5 as audience): "When they objected and reviled him, Paul tore his garments and said to them, 'Your blood be upon your head; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.'" These words embody the theory that the Jews killed Jesus unjustly and must as a race bear that guilt (Matt 27.25; cf. Acts 5.28). They also announce a future course of conduct: "From now on I will go to the Gentiles." Both features of this verse are anachronistic. Many Jews had been converted and there was no call to say that The Jews as such were willing heirs of those Jews who wanted Jesus put to death. Secondly, Paul subsequently followed exactly the same procedure as he had done in Corinth and in every other city he had so far visited: he went to the synagogue first. The verse is a gloss that reflects second-century conditions. Organised Judaism had adopted the Test Benediction that effectively excluded from synagogue worship anyone who held that Jesus was the Messiah. That exclusive policy made it very difficult for Christian missionaries to work among Jews and effectively forced them to confine their preaching to Gentiles. Paul and his contemporaries were operating under no such conditions and they still received a ready welcome in the synagogues. Of course there was opposition, and Paul was eventually taken into custody in Jerusalem for precipitating a riot, but there was far less Jewish opposition to Paul in the cities of Asia Minor and Greece than our present text of Acts would suggest. It was his successful preaching to the Gentiles that often aroused Greek opposition to the dethronement of the local gods.

The reference to The Jews in Acts 18.5 and the whole of Acts 18.6 in our printed text represents a second-century theory

intruded into an account that fits what we can deduce from Galatians.

The final occurrence of what we are coming to recognise as a second-century theory intruded into the text of Acts is at the end of the book, in the report of Paul's house arrest in Rome.

Again the external circumstances suggest a different picture from the purport of some of what is said. Paul is visited by a Jewish delegation that reports that they have received no letters about him from Judaea, nor ill reports of him from fellow Jews who had visited Rome or had been in correspondence with them (Acts 28.21). They want to hear what he thinks (Acts 28.22a). They fix a day and a large body of Jews waits on Paul and hears him speak of the Kingdom of God and Jesus, arguing on the basis of the Law and the Prophets from early in the morning until dusk. Some were persuaded and some did not believe him (Acts 28.24). Some manuscripts of the summarizing verse 30 about Paul's two-year imprisonment before his curcifixion add the information that "he received all who came to him, Jews and Greeks" (614. 2147. some manuscripts of the Vulgate, Syrian Harcleian \*\*). This is very plausible and the reference to both Jews and Greeks as his visitors would be likely to be omitted only by the scribal advocates of the second-century theory we are examining. That theory is embodied in the present context of the "one word" that Paul leaves his audience with as the sun sets on their appointed day of discussion. As our present text stands, there is not one word but two. The first is a long quotation from Isa 6.9-10, cited as showing that Israel as a whole would reject the prophet's message. The second is the statement that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles (Acts 28.28). That is of course a standard part of the expectation of the prophets, that when the day of the Lord came, the Gentiles too would flock to Jerusalem to worship (Isa 49.6,23; 60.3-22; 66.23 repeated at the end by the Masoretes). Paul concludes, *αὐτοὶ καὶ ἀκούσονται* "They too will hear", a verse that is usually mistranslated to convey the sense, "They will hear [even though you do not]."

Again we should conclude that Acts 28.22b and 25b-27, the misuse of Isaiah's prophecy about the hardening effect of his work,

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is an alien intrusion of the second-century theory that the mission of Paul to the Gentiles was the result of the rejection of the gospel by the Jews. The theory is unlikely; it contradicts the reasons Paul gave in Galatians; and it flies in the face of much of the evidence of Acts. But we need to read Acts alert to the anti-Jewish glossing that introduced a late theory into the original account.<sup>5</sup>

Of course there was some Jewish opposition to Paul. Because Paul preached that Gentiles, as Gentiles, could be saved, he raised the possibility that Jews might think that they could neglect the ceremonial law and be saved. It could be said, quite unjustly, that Paul taught that Jews who lived in the Dispersion should forsake Moses, cease circumcising their sons, and stop observing the other customs (Acts 21.21). The report in Acts that he certainly did not so teach is perfectly accurate.

There are three pieces of evidence from the early centuries of the church's life that Jewish Christian synagogues that observed the ceremonial law as well as the moral law continued to exist. In Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, Justin defines his own position with regard to such groups. He attacks Jewish Christians who taught that Gentiles had to become Jews if they were to be saved. He of course deplored Gentile Christians who became Jewish proselytes and denied that Jesus was the Messiah. But he tolerated Jewish Christian synagogues that kept the whole law (in so far as it was possible after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem) and that also acknowledged Gentile believers in Jesus Christ as full Christians without trying to persuade them to be circumcised or to keep the sabbath or to follow the other customs (*Dialogue* 47). This is precious evidence that Jewish Christian synagogues continued into the second century.

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<sup>5</sup> In Acts 19.8-10 it is often assumed that the reviling of Paul by the Jews in the synagogue led to the move from the synagogue to the hall of Tyrannus. It is likely that the original synagogue mentioned in verse 8 was a secular civic building. A number of important minuscules in Acts 19.9 report that the reviling came from some Gentiles among the large audience of Gentiles (257. 383. 614. 1765. 2147). A dispute of Greek against Greek led to the move from the public meeting place to the hall of a local philosopher who accepted Paul's teaching.

Secondly, the party in the church labelled Quartodecimans are likely to have been members of Jewish Christian synagogues. They celebrated Easter on Nisan 14-15, whatever the day of the week, not, as elsewhere, on the following Sunday. This usage was followed by Melito of Sardis, Apollinarus of Hierapolis and Polycarp. Polycarp visited Rome about AD 155 and sought to persuade Anicetus to conform to quartodeciman usage. Anicetus tolerated the use. Later Pope Victor tried to suppress the practice. Polycrates of Ephesus refused and was excommunicated by Victor (Eusebius, *HE* 5.23-26). Later still, those who kept to this practice formed a separate church which survived into the fifth century. I guess that the Quartodeciman churches were synagogues which retained Passover and which celebrated Easter at Passover. This practice had been abandoned by more liberal synagogues who wanted Easter Day to fall on a Sunday.

Thirdly, the Ebionites seem to be Jewish Christians who, as the Poor, saw themselves as standing in the line of the Jerusalem and Judaean churches. According to Jerome, Matthew composed a Hebrew Gospel for use of those of the circumcision who believed. A copy of this Hebrew Gospel was in the library at Caesarea in Jerome's day, and he knew that it was used by Nazorae in Beroea, a city of Syria (*de viris inlustribus* 3). We can gather from Origen and Eusebius that the Ebionites, described by Origen as "Jewish believers who have not left behind the law of their fathers" (*contra Celsum* 2.1), refused to give the Pauline epistles canonical status. They observed the sabbath and circumcision and the customs, in addition to celebrating the eucharist on Sunday (Origen, *contra Celsum* 2.1; 5.61, 65; Eusebius *HE* 3.27; 5.8.10; 6.17.1).

In conclusion I offer a tentative sketch of church history in the first two centuries. My first hunch is that the Pauline Gentile churches simply faded away or became Marcionite or became Gnostics. It is a fact that Justin Martyr, who discusses many of the issues that Paul faced in his epistles, never mentions Paul's name and never actually cites Paul.<sup>6</sup> (Rom 3.11-18 reproduces an old catena of extracts from the Psalms; Justin reproduces a shorter

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<sup>6</sup> See O'Neill (1961, pp. 26-27).

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version of the catena in *Dial* 27, but he is not citing Romans). This silence of Justin argues for the disappearance of the Gentile congregations he founded, or their absorption into the main church. Of course his epistles were preserved and enhanced somewhere until they were given as a corpus to the main church.

But what is this main church that I speak of? This main church was, I think, made up of flourishing Jewish synagogues that believed that Jesus was the Messiah and that succeeded in attracting hosts of Gentile Godfearers to their worship. These synagogues became more and more liberal in their observance of the ceremonial law, largely by intermarriage between Jewish Christians and Godfearing Gentile Christians. In other words, Catholic Christianity was the eventual outcome of the success of believing synagogues in the Dispersion in attracting large numbers of Gentiles to their services. As Wellhausen acknowledged, Theodor Mommsen, the great historian of the Roman Empire, had seen with exemplary clarity that "the Jewish Diaspora is the mother of the church and, because of the events of AD 70, the daughter steps into the inheritance of the mother."<sup>7</sup> In short, when we ask what happened to Greek-speaking Judaism, the answer seems to be that it became catholic Christianity.

Some synagogues that believed in Jesus as Messiah remained solidly Jewish. If they tolerated as Christian other congregations that had become liberal, they were tolerated by the majority. There were pressures to make them conform on such matters as the date of the celebration of Easter, but nevertheless they could still survive. Believing synagogues that cut themselves off from liberal Christianity produced a distinct Jewish Christianity or faded away or were absorbed back into Judaism.

If I am right that Paul's actual Gentile churches failed to flourish, certain momentous conclusions follow. It seems that Catholic Christianity developed without his direct theological influence, but that in the second half of the second century a corpus of his epistles was accepted as part of the canon and began to exert

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<sup>7</sup> Julius Wellhausen in a letter to Theodor Mommsen, Halle, 19 January 1885; Bammel (1969, p. 243).

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an enormous influence on all subsequent Christian theology. When the actual Paul of the epistles was read in the light of the second-century theory of the Pauline mission foisted upon Acts by the scribes, Christianity began to turn against the Jews in a way that would have horrified Paul. The Paul who fully accepted the view that Jewish Christians should go on observing the entire law of Moses was turned into Paul the universalist who wished to abolish anything that distinguished Jew from Greek. Paul's missionary strategy has become strange to us. If we can rediscover its logic, we shall also recover Paul's true theology.

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*Abide with me: The World of Victorian Hymns* by Ian Bradley [London. SCM Press, 1997].

The film star Joan Collins was recently invited back to her old school to open a new swimming pool. Journalists who covered the event noted that the actress joined with enthusiasm as the pupils sang Kipling's hymn "Father in heaven, who lovest all." The newsmen were amused to hear Miss Collins singing the line, "Teach us delight in simple things", as her chauffeur waited outside in here stretch-limo to whisk her off to a book-signing session in Harrods. This story is but one of many such gems for the reader in Ian Bradley's book.

Those remarkably inventive people, the Victorians came up with three revolutionary innovations which still shape our world today. They invented the railway system, the penny post and the hymn-book. Yes, the idea of a hymn-book with each hymn accompanied on the same page by the tune to which it belongs is a Victorian innovation, one which deserves comparison with the other two great revolutions of that age.

Ian Bradley loves Victorian hymns. As the teacher of the only honours course in hymnology at a British University [at Aberdeen], he rejoices in the wonderful contribution to worship achieved by the theology, poetry and music of the Victorian hymn. He tells his story with enthusiasm and more than a little humour. Reading his book is a most entertaining way for any modern Christian to educate himself or herself about the huge contributions of the Victorians to the worship of the church.

Only a fool would play down the role of hymns in our awareness of God today. Bradley quotes R.D. Dale who declared: "Let me write the hymns of a Church and I care not who writes the theology." The Victorian age saw a tremendous interest in choral singing in all walks of life. So in the church the time was ripe for a new enthusiasm for singing by the congregation. The eighteenth century masters, especially Isaac Watts and the Wesley brothers,

had given hymns back to the people. But it was the Victorians who made the hymn such a vital and universal part of our approach to God.

Bradley traces the fascinating story of how in the Church of England the old west gallery musicians were steadily removed from their leading role in worship to be replaced by organ-accompanied hymn-singing in which the whole congregation took part. Both high church reformers and evangelical enthusiasts were in favour of hymns sung by all present as a dramatic demonstration of the priesthood of all believers.

In the early Victorian period it would seem that almost every rural clergyman was a composer and a collector of hymns. Two of these enthusiasts, William Denton of Cripplegate and Francis Murray of Chislehurst, met in a railway carriage and decided to recruit others in an effort to produce one really good hymn-book. A meeting in a Pimlico vicarage led to the forming of a committee and the placing of an advertisement in the press asking for contributions. Thus was born *Hymns Ancient and Modern* [1860], the first modern hymn-book in our sense of the word. The influence of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* on all subsequent hymn-books and on the worship of the church was momentous. Its radical innovation was to give each hymn its own particular tune, thus ending the free-for-all approach caused by having separate books for words and tunes. One Dorset vicar reported that before the book appeared his church had a barrel organ with just three tunes and two chants. The congregation numbered twelve of whom only three regularly took communion. After the introduction of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* the congregation had increased to 150 and the number of communicants to 25.

Bradley traces the American influence on hymnody and devotes considerable space to the revivals spearheaded by the evangelist, D.W. Moody and his colleague, the singer and choir leader, Ira Sankey. Music played a key role both in creating the mood and reinforcing the message at the huge rallies they conducted on three

tours of Britain in the 1870's, 1880's and 1890's. Sankey concentrated on a repertoire of around thirty gospel songs [including the rousing "Hold the fort for I am coming"], which became instantly popular. Some of Sankey's hymns eventually found their way into the hymnals of mainstream churches.

Although an unashamed enthusiast, Bradley is by no means naïve about Victorian hymns. He admits that there is much dross from which genuine gold must be extracted. Yet he refuses to endorse the modern tendency to dismiss most of the Victorian legacy as inadequate theologically and musically. Indeed he works hard to defend hymns which have been prematurely rejected. For example, he points out that "Onward Christian Soldiers" is not militaristic, but simply uses the military metaphor taken from the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. He praises "Make me a captive Lord and then I shall be free" for its masterly exploration of the Christian contradiction of the One in whose service we find perfect freedom.

The debate in our day between those who prefer theological and poetic hymns, rather than the more superficial "happy-clappy" offerings was mirrored by a similar controversy in Victorian times. Robert Bridges appealed for church music to be

a sacred music, devoted to its purpose, a music whose peace should still passion, whose dignity should strengthen our faith, whose unquestioned beauty should find a home in our hearts, to cheer us in life and in death.

His words might well have come from a modern critic of the choruses in a revivalist hymnal. There truly is nothing new under the sun.

The Victorian age was one of strong faith. Bradley points out that three out of every four English children attended Sunday School. Nevertheless; the most popular hymn of the era dealt with doubt. "Lead, kindly light amid the encircling gloom" was never meant by John Henry Newman as anything other than a personal poetic expression of his struggle to retain faith. Newman was surprised to

find how precious his words had become to congregations. Bradley comments: "To pluck Newman's verses from our hymn-book would be to deprive the many who face and wrestle with honest doubt of a powerful poetic soul-mate." Bradley feels that the tune "Lux in Tenebris" does most justice to the words of Newman's masterpiece.

Much of the sheer delight in reading this book lies in the many fascinating anecdotes and interesting facts with which the author expands the blinkered view we tend to have of the Victorians. Bradley shows us Prime Minister, William Gladstone, himself an author of hymns, urging hymn-writers to see their role as similar to that of the preacher "to select", expound and illustrate his text, to dive into its inner meanings, and clothe it in a vesture of song."

He introduces us to an ordinary Scottish church organist called Jessie Irvine, who wrote a hymn tune as an exercise for an organists' class she was attending in Banff, without any idea that "Crimond" would in time become the most favoured tune for the metric twenty-third Psalm and would be used at the wedding of Princess Elizabeth to Philip Mountbatten in 1947.

We find Arthur Sullivan, famous for his collaboration with W.S. Gilbert in comic operas, dashing off a hymn-tune in the salon of a country house and naming it "St. Gertrude" after his hostess. It was this tune which turned "Onward, Christian Soldiers" into such an all-time favourite. We are also enabled to approach the death-bed of Henry Baker, where the dying poet found comfort by whispering,

"Perverse and foolish oft I strayed;  
But yet in love he sought me,  
And on his shoulder gently laid,  
And home rejoicing brought me."

He was quoting a stanza of his own hymn, "The King of love my shepherd is."

F.W. Faber's "Faith of our fathers" is at present enjoying great popularity in Ireland, where its release on a nostalgic CD has achieved best-seller status. It may surprise Irish enthusiasts of this hymn to learn that it is totally English. Faber wrote it in an attempt to reverse the tide of Protestantism and return England to its Roman roots. Other hymns by Faber, with their devotion to the Virgin Mary omitted, were included in Protestant hymn-books, including that current favourite of all broad-minded Protestants, "There's a wideness in God's mercy."

Throughout the book Bradley shows a detailed knowledge of history, theology and church music. The reader will find great value in the list of a hundred Victorian hymns which Bradley considers should be in any self-respecting modern hymnal and also in the list of fourteen hymns and four tunes which he wants to see restored to use in worship today.

The concluding chapter which shows how Victorian hymns continue to be used in our century includes a plea to "trendy clergy" not to kill off these sources of faith, hope and love in the name of mindless modernity. Bradley quotes an earnest letter to the press:

Quite how one conveys to an earnest cloth-eared vicar that he is getting it all wrong is a difficult question. The man has been to theological college. He may have developed the spiritual resources to cope without 'Jerusalem', 'Immortal, invisible, God only wise', 'Dear Lord and Father of mankind', 'Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom' and 'Abide with me, fast falls the eventide'. Perhaps the most tactful thing we can do is tell him that in our weakness, we need these pillars of our faith.

After reading this engaging study no pastor, cloth-eared or otherwise, would dare to write-off the gigantic contribution of the Victorians to the praise of the church.

Denis Campbell.

**The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age, Theological Essays in Culture and Religion.** (Ed), Kevin J. Vanhoozer. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan. £12.99.

'Of making many books there is no end.' This applies in particular to the doctrine of the Trinity which has seen a welcome revival of interest in the last decades even though there have been variations in how best to express its nature intellectually. In parallel to this has been the movement of religious pluralism which has taken many forms. This book is a series of essays written largely from the stance of received Christian orthodoxy and raising many issues that emerge when confronted with the plurality of religions, religious viewpoints and secular culture.

In a comprehensive essay the Editor points to the varied aspects of pluralism which may be atheist or agnostic; to the plurality of religions often seen by post-modernism as showing that these are many roads to the one God. Others within Christianity believe 'a pluralist theology of religions aims at recognising the validity of other religions without abandoning Christian faith.' (53) The difficulties in such an approach are obvious, namely, the acceptance of a general view of truth rather than the particularity of the Christian revelation, or an emphasis on the pragmatic, practical aspects of humanity which are said to point beyond themselves to the divine rather than being concerned with the nature and reality of revealed truth. The Editor points to the case of Panniker who attempts a trinitarian pluralism, a 'perichoresis' of religions, where Christ becomes a symbol for the divine-human mystery and the Trinity a symbol for theandism. This attempt to combine the advaistic tradition of Hinduism with the Christian concept of God fails and a pluralism of this kind ends in relativism and reductionism. The same can be said to a lesser extent of Rowan Williams' attempt to follow Panniker in a 'loyalty-openness' relationship between Christian faith and other faiths. Williams goes even so far as to say that 'the mystery of Christ will be realised in forms hitherto unknown in Christianity.' (60) This particular form of rapprochement is rightly criticised by John

Milbank and Gavin D'Costa as Vanhoozer shows. (63) The Spirit that is said to unite these is scarcely the Spirit of the one true Word of God.

The views of Karl Barth and Karl Rahner are carefully examined, the former by Trevor Hart and the latter by Gary Badcock. Barth's view of the Trinity as the distinctive expression of Christian revelation means that he first gives a radical critique of religion as, on the one hand abolished (*Aufhebung*) by revelation yet at the same time lifted to its true place by it. The writer could have added Barth's later work on reconciliation where Jesus Christ includes all humanity in himself. As he is Lord of all as the one Word of God, this, nonetheless, leaves room for true words of God *extra muros ecclesiae* which, however, are only true insofar as they conform to the Christian revelation. Rahner's approach from below and his view of 'anonymous Christianity' as well as his transcendentalism leave room for an openness to others while affirming the truth of the Trinity. In his later life Rahner pioneered dialogue with Islam. This is not to say that he was in any way disloyal to what he perceived to be Catholic truth.

Various writers, including Stephen Williams, point out that the whole question of pluralism in relation to the Trinity poses the question of criteria. In what way, by what standard can one judge the true from the false. At the same time these writers believe in the truth of the gospel and see the best way to approach others as genuine witness to the faith that Christians have in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

In a perceptive essay, Colin Gunton examines the basis of what he regards as 'modern relative pluralism' and believes 'to flirt' with post-modernism in some of its forms is to invite disaster'. (89) Dealing with the doctrine of creation he points out that there is an essential unity which undergirds the created order because it is given by God, and thus distinguishes the creator from creation, and is the basis on which the whole scientific approach of the modern age is founded. 'The foundation and the unity of things rest in Jesus Christ, the one Word of God, through whom the Father creates, upholds and redeems all that is.' (89) He attacks foundationalism not for seeking a common rationality, but for

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seeking a wrong one in the wrong way. In other words it seeks a merely secular and relative answer to creation and life. Gunton purposes the acceptance of a general revelation of God in creation - a la Calvin and contra Barth's christological concentration. His position, however, is closely linked to the fact that the created order came into being and is sustained by Jesus Christ, the one Word of God so that a mere general revelation here is subsumed under the particularity and person of Jesus Christ. In this sense what he is saying is that it is the Trinity as understood in revelation that is really the one basis, the foundation of all creation, the Trinity which in itself can be expressed as a plurality in unity.

All in all a worthwhile series of essays and an affirmation of the reality of the Christian revelation with a balanced critique of many aspects of post-modern pluralism.

John Thompson.